

Washington, DC -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman Richard Hanna (R-NY) today requested a Federal Emergency Declaration for six New York Counties, including Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga and Tompkins, where flood waters have risen to catastrophic levels. An emergency declaration would make federal resources immediately available to mitigate flood damage, save lives, protect property and public infrastructure, and ensure public health and safety.

"I am absolutely committed to delivering every last dime of federal assistance necessary to help this area recover," said Hinchey. "Our first priority must be ensuring public safety and mitigating the damage being caused by rising flood waters. Police, firefighters, other first responders and local officials worked around the clock last night. They need some backup, and a federal emergency designation will help provide that assistance."

"I am monitoring the situation in the Southern Tier and am concerned as it appears the City of Binghamton may experience very serious and devastating flooding," Hanna said. "I stand ready to support any necessary requests for federal aid. I urge residents to heed warnings from local law enforcement and public officials, and prepare for flooding to develop as rivers and creeks continue to rise. I will continue to monitor developments throughout Upstate New York should additional resources be needed."

The full text of the letter to Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Fugate, requesting a Federal Emergency Declaration follows:

September 8, 2011

Hon. William Craig Fugate, Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Fugate:

In light of the flooding devastating New York's Southern Tier, we are writing to request that Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga and Tompkins counties be immediately granted a Federal Emergency Declaration.

As you know, in 2006 this area suffered devastating flooding that cost lives and millions of dollars in damages. Today, reports from local officials confirm that recent heavy rain is causing flooding that will meet or exceed the historic levels we saw five years ago. Tremendous damage to infrastructure and homes has already been reported, and the Susquehanna River near Binghamton is not expected to crest until later tonight.

Evacuations are already occurring in flooded regions and power outages are creating additional challenges for residents. Binghamton's downtown area has been evacuated and closed off. Nearly 400 people from the Village of Nichols in Tioga County have been moved to the former Nichols Elementary School. With washed out roads, these residents are virtually stranded and have told us they are in need of immediate assistance. Without an Emergency Declaration, this burden will fall to local and state officials alone. Governor Andrew Cuomo has already deployed over 100 National Guard troops to mitigate the damage.

We greatly appreciate FEMA's quick response in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene; however, we cannot allow the victims of this flooding from Hurricane Lee in the Southern Tier to be overlooked. We urge you to extend federal resources to the region as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your efforts during this relief work.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey

Richard Hanna

cc: Lynn Gilmore Canton, FEMA Regional Administrator, Region II